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SUBJECT: Triet Visit: MFA Confirms June 22 Meeting with President,
Underlines Commitment to Successful Visit

¶1. (SBU) Summary: President Nguyen Minh Triet has "officially accepted" June 22 as the date of his meeting with President Bush, and is also considering the MFA's recommendations that he stop in New York and Los Angeles and issue a Joint Statement with President Bush. Furthermore, the GVN is pulling out all the stops to ensure a successful visit, Americas Department DDG Nguyen Ba Hung told Pol/C on May 7. Vietnam hopes to sign official and commercial agreements in a number of areas, including Peace Corps and TIFA. However, Hung expressed concern that anti-Vietnam legislation and other actions in the United States will undermine the Triet visit. In response to Pol/C's observation that the ongoing human rights crackdown will also negatively impact the visit, Hung said that the GVN is "seriously considering" releasing Nguyen Vu Binh and will soon provide information on former NED fellow (and recent arrestee) Le Quoc Quan. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) MFA Americas Department DDG Nguyen Ba Hung called in Pol/C to discuss President Nguyen Minh Triet's upcoming visit to the United States. Although the Office of the President had at one point considered seeking to reschedule the date of the meeting with President George W. Bush from June 22 to June 21, President Triet has now "officially accepted" June 22, Hung said. The MFA has proposed to the Office of the President that, after Washington, D.C., Triet also visit New York and Los Angeles. MFA has also proposed to the Office of President that Presidents Bush and Triet have another Joint Statement (similar to those from President Bush's November 2006 visit to Hanoi and former Prime Minister Phan Van Khai's June 2005 visit to Washington). The MFA should hear soon the President's response to both of these proposals, Hung said.

¶3. (SBU) The GVN is pulling out all the stops to ensure that the President's visit is a success, Hung continued. Vietnam hopes to sign agreements and contracts in a number of areas, including: a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA); commercial agreements for companies such as Boeing, SSA and Gannon; Peace Corps; underwater recovery operations for missing personnel from the war (an "MIA vessel," in Hung's words); and others. In response to Pol/C's question about PSI being another possible deliverable, Hung said that the GVN is "thinking hard about it."

¶4. (SBU) Education is another area in which the two countries can expand their cooperation, Hung noted. Replying to Pol/C's request for details about what exactly the GVN has in mind, Hung said Vietnam would like USG "endorsement" of American assistance for the construction of a world-class university, training for English language teachers and providing fellowships for university and other students. Turning to Peace Corps, DDG Hung noted that he will join representatives from the Ministry of Education and Training in a meeting with Embassy representatives on the subject on May 11.

¶5. (SBU) Hung lamented that a number of recent actions in the United States threaten to damage America's image in Vietnam and cast a pall

over the Triet visit. Among these are: the Oregon state legislature's recent endorsement of the old South Vietnamese flag as the flag of the Viet-Kieu community there (with even the Governor offering his support); the Committee on International Religious Freedom's call on the Department to redesignate Vietnam a Country of Particular Concern; and, the recent passage of H.R. 243 on the human rights situation in Vietnam. While the GVN understands that all of these are outside the control of the USG, they nonetheless could undermine the Triet visit.

16. (SBU) Pol/C responded that Vietnam's ongoing human rights crackdown could also negatively impact the Triet visit, and that GVN steps to mitigate this and release prisoners and detainees would do much to improve things. DDG Hung replied that the GVN will release Phan Van Ban on May 9 and is "seriously considering" releasing Nguyen Vu Binh. Furthermore, a "senior official" will soon be writing to concerned American officials about the case of former NED fellow Le Quoc Quan, laying out the GVN's case that Quan is involved with the Viet Tan "terrorist group." Pol/C urged Hung to provide us with whatever information and evidence the GVN has on this group, particularly as some in the government have made serious allegations about a Member of Congress' involvement with this group.

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